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EDUCATIONAL NEWS AND EDITORIAL COMMENT

THE CHICAGO DINNER

Former students and graduates of the University of Chicago who expect to attend the meeting of the Department of Superintendence in Kansas City in February are reminded of the annual dinner which is held at this meeting. The dinner will be given at the Hotel Muehlebach on the evening of Tuesday, February 27, at six o'clock. The price will be \$1.50 per plate. Tickets can be secured in advance by writing to Dean W. S. Gray at the School of Education, or tickets will be supplied at the time of the dinner to all who have signified by Tuesday morning their intention of being present.

COLLEGE TEACHERS OF EDUCATION

KANSAS CITY, FEBRUARY 26, 27

Monday Forenoon, February 26—Program I. Hotel Baltimore.

Monday Noon, February 26—Luncheon of the Society, Hotel Baltimore.

Monday Afternoon, February 26—Program II. Hotel Baltimore.

Tuesday Forenoon, February 27—Program III. Hotel Baltimore.

Tuesday Noon, February 27—Luncheon of the Society. Hotel Baltimore.

FIRST SESSION

General Topic: "Standardization of Courses for the
Training of Teachers"

1. "What Should Constitute a Complete Undergraduate Course for a Prospective High-School Teacher? Speaker to be supplied.

2. "Should the Scientific or the Technological Aspects of Education as a Profession Be Most Emphasized? Ernest Horn, State University of Iowa.

3. "Uniform Nomenclature." G. M. Wilson, Iowa State College.

4. "Definiteness as a Means to Uniformity in Education Terminology." A. Duncan Yocum, University of Pennsylvania.

5. General Discussion.

SECOND SESSION

"Ten-Minute Reports of Current Investigations"

1. "Teacher-Training Agencies in the High Schools of Minnesota." L. D. Coffman, University of Minnesota.
2. "The Situation in North Central Territory Concerning the Professional Training of Teachers in High Schools." H. A. Hollister, University of Illinois.
3. "What Are Teachers Colleges, Schools of Education, and Normal Schools Doing Actually to Prepare Their Graduates for Socialization Work in the Schools?" H. D. Sheldon, University of Oregon.
4. "Distribution of Major and Minor Subjects among Candidates for the Teacher's Diploma at the University of Michigan." C. O. Davis, University of Michigan.
5. "Distribution of Grades in School and College." A. Inglis, Harvard University.
6. "The Relation between Mental Age and School Attainments in Backward Children." C. S. Berry, University of Michigan.
7. "Measurement of Reading." M. E. Haggerty, University of Minnesota.
8. "The Experimental Study of Rhythm in Handwriting." F. N. Freeman, University of Chicago.
9. "Rhythm in Handwriting." H. W. Nutt, University of Kansas.
10. "A Study to Determine the Amount of Arithmetic Available in the Case of High-School Graduates Who Have Not Had Arithmetic in the High-School Course." J. A. Drushell, Harris Teachers College.
11. Standardized Tests in First-Year Algebra. H. O. Rugg, School of Education, University of Chicago.
12. Other reports to be supplied.

WYOMING PLAN OF MILITARY DRILL FOR CHICAGO SCHOOLS

Public announcement is made to the effect that Captain E. Z. Steever, of the United States Army, with a corps of four lieutenants and sixteen sergeants of the regular army, will inaugurate a system of military drill in the high schools of certain cities within the central department of the army. Ten officers are assigned to the twenty-three high schools of Chicago. The so-called "Wyoming plan" is said to have been selected, and approved by the Secretary of War.

The essence of the Wyoming plan is the organization of competitive units in the various schools. Boys are assigned to various scaling units,

infantry units, drill units, troop leadership units, field firing units, camp and field units, etc., in such a way that each unit is made up of an equal number of strong, medium, and weak lads. Cadet classes are held as best suits the local school authorities. Up-to-date equipment is furnished by the government, with the exception of uniforms, for which some other provision must be made. Each cadet will have a rifle; skill in handling the weapon will be an essential part of the program. Membership in the military squads is by no means compulsory, each student and his guardians having the privilege of determining whether or not military training shall be undertaken. We suspect that the women who instructed their sixteen-year-old sons to stand at the polls last November and say to every voter, "We don't want to fight; we want to stay at home with our mothers"—that such women will veto the plan for their sons. At least four such boys will be denied, under this assumption, in the sixth ward of Chicago.

This system, which appears very simple on paper, is beset with many petty difficulties. Some of these Captain Steever is experiencing as he looks over the ground in Chicago. Who will provide uniforms? How will the drill be adjusted with the high-school program? What about rifles, firing ranges, and the like? Captain Steever has taken the firm and sensible position that military drill without guns is sentimental and senseless. What about a system of cadet officers among high-school lads? The commandant is said to favor a plan of "cadet leadership" as opposed to cadet officers. Instead of captains, colonels, lieutenants, there is proposed for Chicago units the titles of platoon, company, and battalion "chiefs," like chiefs of the departments of a railway system.

MORE SERIOUS DIFFICULTIES OF MILITARY DRILL

But the difficulties just mentioned are insignificant compared with others, fundamental and almost insuperable, in any scheme of voluntary drill. Anyone who is familiar with the cadet system as carried out in state universities knows the general sentiment among the rank and file of students—"It's all right for the officers, but it is a hard, thankless job for the privates in the rear rank." This feeling is expressed with various shades of emphasis. And military drill, if it is to amount to anything, must be more than a light education in gentlemanly gymnastics. It is hard and serious work. Setting-up exercises require long and sustained attention by men whose hearts are in the work. But we find that most of the university battalions have discarded all but a mere sham and pretense at setting-up exercises. When they are carried out

the cadets loaf through them in a slipshod manner. The manual of arms and company maneuvers are more easily supervised and are generally carried out with credit. But the truth is that compulsory drill even in the universities is looked on as a bore, a job to be got through as quickly and as easily as possible. Young men resent the airs often assumed by cadet officers on the field; off the field such airs would be rewarded by a ducking in the river. Military balls are not popular with those college boys who have to attend in a private's uniform.

It may be thought that the Wyoming plan avoids both of these difficulties, because it is voluntary, and calls for chiefs, not officers. However, the elective system may leave out the very boys, big strapping fellows, who ought to be drilled if the scheme has any military purpose; it may leave out little anaemic chaps who ought to be drilled if the purpose is physical training. Moreover, when once in, and the glamor has passed, many boys will elect to change their minds and drop out, if allowed. If not, they will make life miserable for cadet officers. The army officer and the school officials will have their hands full in maintaining discipline. If compelled to remain against their will, the lads may become slackers. In the absence of any real compulsion many cases of this kind are bound to occur.

Again, it appears ridiculous to abolish military terms for officers. To call them chiefs sounds like the organization of a police force. Moreover, the change of name will not touch the real difficulty, the heart of which lies here: boy A, by painstaking industry, has under military promotions, become an officer. Boys B, C, and D, who are better students, stronger athletes, or from richer families, and know it, begin to sneer, sulk in their work, or insult the young officer. This result cannot be avoided by a mere change of name.

WHAT MUST BE DONE

Military drill if effeminated and sugar-coated is likely to be a great and humiliating failure. The expedition of 100,000 militia to the Mexican border brought these men home disgusted. You cannot make play out of hard work. Discipline means a certain amount of drudgery, slavish attention to detail, rigid obedience to authority. The *School Review* believes that such discipline is valuable and much needed among our high-school boys; so much so, that we welcome an experiment in Chicago, provided it is given any chance to succeed. We believe it has no chance of success, unless from the very beginning the following principles are incorporated:

1. Make membership a real privilege, by keeping the companies small; make expulsion a disgrace.
 2. Call the option "enlistment," with a sensible application of what that means.
 3. Keep authority firmly in the hands of the army officers.
 4. Multiply the competitive features, especially interschool firing matches, and competitive drills.
 5. Teach seriously the use of firearms, plan summer camps for brief periods.
 6. Incorporate credit for graduation on exactly the same basis as in any other elective study.
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CREDIT FOR OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES

The suggestion that credit toward graduation be allowed for serious and sustained attention to military training, raises the general question as to the advisability of such procedure. High schools all over the country are giving school credits for everything under the sun, from baking the bread and making the beds at home, to private music lessons and Boy-Scout activities. The latest is the experiment of Austin, Texas, with the Boy-Scout work. Credit is allowed on the following conditions:

1. For passing one set of Scout tests above tenderfoot, $\frac{1}{4}$ credit per term.
2. For each two merit badges passed, $\frac{1}{8}$ credit.
3. Upon passing to rank of Eagle Scout 1 unit to be given in addition to other credit gained.
4. Maximum credit for work done exclusive of passing to Eagle Scout must not exceed $\frac{1}{2}$ credit per year.
5. Credits shall not be retroactive and not less than $\frac{1}{2}$ credit shall count toward graduation.
6. All credit must be approved by the Court of Honor and the city superintendent of schools.
7. Recommendations for credit to the Court of Honor must be signed by the chairman of the Troop Committee, the Scoutmaster and the Scout Commissioner.

Progressive schoolmen are decidedly right in their efforts to tie up the work of the school with the home life of pupils and with their outside activities. But there is one caution that must ever be borne in mind. Work for which credit is given ought to be rigorously estimated in terms

of time, and of substance, equivalent in amount to the amount, disciplinary value of actual school work. Such an effort appears to have been made in Austin. Certainly the lad who attains the higher merit badges of the Scouts, has had fully the equivalent of a course in physical training lasting the same time. In Austin, too, the wise provision seems to be made that the ultimate decision as to the credits must rest with school authorities. Parents, or even enthusiastic Boy-Scout Leaders might be inclined to recommend credit for pupils who had accomplished merely the form of the requirements, while in reality they have utterly failed in the real substance of them.

THE PASSING OF BLACKBOARDS

The year 1817 may be taken roughly as marking the appearance of blackboards in American schools; slate and pencil were devices adopted somewhat earlier. School literature of the first quarter of the eighteenth century contains many references to the former of these devices as a new and untried experiment. For one hundred years slate and blackboard have been considered indispensable in any well-conducted classroom. But the year 1917 may be the beginning of the end for the board, the passing of that device following the disappearance of the slate and pencil by about the same difference of time which marked their beginning. Only the most backward schools today tolerate the slate; and a few of the most progressive are endeavoring to find substitutes for the board.

EXTENSION WORK FOR TEACHERS IN KANSAS

A comparatively new form of extension work combining the thoroughness of correspondence study with the inspiration to be gained from group study under the direction of a college instructor is being practiced on a large scale in southeastern Kansas by the State Manual Training Normal School at Pittsburg. On a conservative estimate more than one thousand persons, most of them teachers in active service, have enrolled this fall in some of the numerous courses offered.

This work was organized two years ago. It was only last year, however, that it began to take on large proportions. Twenty-three cities and towns had groups of students meeting for instruction every week or every two weeks. This fall there are thirty-three towns on the list and forty-five classes. Other towns are asking to be placed on it. Each Friday afternoon twelve or fifteen members of the faculty pack their grips for a trip over their circuits.

The normal school at Kent, Ohio, and the State Teachers' College at Cedar Falls, Iowa, are doing similar work. Several other institutions are working out extension-study systems for teachers.

The faculty of the Manual Normal School could see no reason why the school should not extend itself to the teachers in the field, just as the agricultural colleges all over the country are doing for the farmers. It is the only school in Kansas that furnishes this particular sort of extension-study facilities. The system it has built up within the short space of two years would seem to indicate that the plan will be successfully adopted in many states.

College or high-school credits are allowed for all work. The amount any student may take is strictly limited. Nor is gaining credits a matter of merely attending a lecture weekly. The written work required is, in most courses, the only thing considered in estimating the grades.

The meetings of the study group have for their purpose the taking of the atmosphere of the training school to the teachers in the field with the inspiration that is secured through group effort. The only difference that results in regard to the written work, as compared with the usual correspondence course, is that this work is done more easily because done more intelligently. The instructors outline courses, anticipate difficulties, and comb out tangles. The same amount of written work is required as though the courses were given by correspondence alone.

But one other result accrues from these group meetings, a result to which the instructors attach much value. It is that they are enabled to keep in close and vital touch with conditions in the school's field. They learn the field's needs at first hand. Every week they talk over some of its problems with the teachers who are trying to solve them. They believe that in this way they will make the school a greater force for educational progress by "keeping down to the grass roots," as they say in Kansas.

One of the courses offered is distinctly novel. This is organized especially to meet the needs of a large group of city teachers. The superintendent in the cities of Chanute, Parsons, Coffeyville, and Independence, all cities of the first class, said that they wished their teachers to take work that would keep them abreast of present-day movements in education. A course dealing with the larger problems of modern education and based on a library of twenty volumes is the department's answer. Every teacher in the four cities is required, by ruling of the school boards, to take the course, which has an enrolment of about three hundred.